The House of Habsburg and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

Nine Centuries of Dynastic Alliance — Documented Members & Decoration Recipients of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, with Emphasis on the Post-1945 Era

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Preface

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM) — formally the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta — is the world's oldest surviving order of chivalry, with an unbroken institutional lineage stretching back to the hospital of Blessed Gerard in Jerusalem in the late eleventh century. Among all the great dynasties of European history, none has been more deeply intertwined with SMOM across the centuries than the House of Habsburg. That relationship — which began with Frederick Barbarossa's charter of protection in 1185 and reached its most dramatic expression when Holy Roman Emperor Charles V granted the Order the island of Malta in 1530 — remained a living institutional connection into the twentieth century, when the last Crown Prince of the Habsburg dynasty, Otto von Habsburg, held SMOM's highest rank as a Bailiff Knight Grand Cross and carried a SMOM diplomatic passport during the years he was stateless.

This report examines that relationship in its historical depth, documents the Order's post-World War II membership and its connections to Western intelligence services, political networks, and Cold War operations, and provides as comprehensive a catalogue as publicly available sources permit of known SMOM members and decoration recipients. The report distinguishes carefully between confirmed members, widely reported members whose affiliation is supported by secondary sources, and those whose connection appears only on unverified lists. It does not endorse conspiracy theories but reports on what serious scholarship and investigative journalism have established.

PART ONE: The Habsburg Dynasty and SMOM — Nine Centuries of Alliance

I.1 Origins: The Hospital of Jerusalem and the Holy Roman Empire

The Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem traces its founding to approximately 1080, when a lay brother known as Blessed Gerard was appointed to administer a hospital in Jerusalem providing care for Christian pilgrims. Pope Paschal II confirmed the Order's independence by papal bull in 1113. By 1136, under Grand Master Raymond du Puy, the Order had taken on its military character, becoming a fighting force as well as a hospital order — the Hospitallers, a counterpart to the Knights

Templar. In 1185, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, arguably the greatest emperor of the medieval period, granted the Order formal protection and a charter of privileges. This was the foundational moment of the relationship between the Holy Roman Empire — later synonymous with the Habsburgs — and the Hospitallers.

The Order's military campaigns across the Crusades, its sojourn on Cyprus, and its long governance of the island of Rhodes (from 1309 until their expulsion by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522) made it the premier military-religious order of Christendom. Its defeat at Rhodes, after a heroic siege, left it without territory or base — and in need of a powerful patron.

I.2 Charles V, Malta, and the Imperial Grant (1530)

The pivotal act in the Habsburg-SMOM relationship came on 24 March 1530, when Holy Roman Emperor **Charles V** — simultaneously King of Spain and ruler of the Habsburg Empire at its greatest territorial extent — granted the Knights Hospitaller the islands of Malta, Gozo, and the North African port of Tripoli in perpetual fief. The symbolic annual rent was a single Maltese falcon, delivered on All Saints' Day to the Viceroy of Sicily. Charles V's grant was not charity but strategic calculation: the Knights provided a military bulwark for Christian Europe against Ottoman expansion in the central Mediterranean, defending the sea lanes that connected Spain to its Italian territories.

Upon arriving at Malta, the Grand Master and Knights were greeted by Charles V's representative and styled 'Lords of the Island.' Charles V invested enormous personal interest in Malta's fortification, providing additional resources after the Knights' initial disappointment with the island's barrenness. The Emperor's decision shaped Mediterranean history: the Order's presence on Malta produced the Great Siege of 1565 — one of the pivotal engagements of the sixteenth century — at which the Knights and their Maltese allies repelled an Ottoman force estimated at 40,000 men with fewer than 700 knights and approximately 5,000 Maltese soldiers. The victory halted Ottoman westward expansion in the central Mediterranean.

I.3 The 1607 Reichsfürst Status and Habsburg Patronage

In 1607, Holy Roman Emperor **Rudolf II** — a Habsburg — awarded the Grand Master of the Order the status of *Reichsfürst* (Prince of the Holy Roman Empire), giving the Order's leadership formal imperial dignity equivalent to the princes of the Empire. In 1630, under Emperor **Ferdinand II**, the Grand Master was additionally granted ecclesiastical equality with cardinals, and the unique combined title 'His Most Eminent Highness' — reflecting both his princely and quasi-clerical status. This extraordinary set of privileges placed the Grand Master of SMOM on a level of dignity matched by virtually no other non-royal office in Christendom, and it was granted and sustained by Habsburg imperial authority.

Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, members of the Habsburg dynasty and their affiliated aristocracy provided the majority of SMOM's senior leadership and richest commanderies. The Order's great priories in Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, and the Spanish and Italian Habsburg territories were among its wealthiest and most militarily significant. Habsburg nobles filled its ranks as a matter of dynastic culture and religious duty. The Habsburgs' fierce Catholicism — the Counter-Reformation was driven in large measure by Habsburg emperors — made their patronage of the premier Catholic military order a natural expression of dynastic identity.

I.4 Battle of Lepanto and the Holy League (1571)

The most militarily significant joint Habsburg-SMOM operation was the Battle of Lepanto on 7 October 1571. The Holy League — a coalition assembled by Pope Pius V and dominated by Habsburg Spain — deployed a combined fleet commanded by **Don John of Austria**, the illegitimate half-brother of King Philip II of Spain. SMOM contributed twelve of its war galleys to the fleet. The battle resulted in the near-total destruction of the Ottoman fleet and the deaths of approximately 30,000 Ottoman sailors and soldiers — the largest naval engagement in Mediterranean history since antiquity. Lepanto broke Ottoman naval supremacy and cemented the Habsburg-SMOM alliance as the cornerstone of Catholic Mediterranean defence.

I.5 Napoleon, the Russian Interlude, and the Roman Settlement (1798–1834)

The Napoleonic era dealt SMOM its most severe institutional crisis. In June 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte captured Malta en route to Egypt, expelling the Knights after 268 years of rule. The Order dispersed across Europe, eventually finding temporary refuge at the court of Tsar Paul I of Russia — an episode that produced the anomaly of an Orthodox Christian emperor briefly acting as protector of a Catholic military order. After Napoleon's defeat, the Congress of Vienna (1814–15), largely shaped by Habsburg Chancellor Prince Metternich, restored the Order's sovereign status and properties, though without recovering Malta (which became a British possession). In 1834, the Order settled permanently in Rome, establishing its headquarters at the Palazzo Malta on the Via dei Condotti — where it remains to this day — under the formal protection of the Holy See. The Habsburg connection was maintained through the nineteenth century, with multiple Archdukes serving as knights and Austrian grand priories remaining among the Order's most active.

I.6 The Teutonic Order: A Parallel Habsburg-Chivalric Relationship

The Habsburg dynasty's chivalric commitments extended beyond SMOM. From 1804, the Teutonic Order — another Crusading military order with deep Central European roots — was headed by members of the Habsburg dynasty itself. The collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918 created an institutional crisis for the Teutonic Order, which, to avoid having its properties confiscated as Habsburg dynastic assets, transformed itself into a purely Catholic religious order in 1923. The High Master at that moment was **Field Marshal Archduke Eugen of Austria-Teschen**, a Habsburg. Otto von Habsburg was later named an Honorary Knight of the Teutonic Order, underlining the dynasty's continued identification with the full spectrum of Catholic chivalric orders.

PART TWO: Otto von Habsburg and SMOM in the Twentieth Century

II.1 Membership Since 1932: The Youngest Bailiff Grand Cross

Otto von Habsburg became a member of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in **1932** — nine years before his family was forced into full exile, and six years before the Nazi annexation of Austria. The Order of Malta's own official website, in its obituary notice marking Otto's death and funeral in 2011, confirmed: 'Head of the Imperial House of Habsburg from 1922 to 2007 and **member of the Order of Malta since 1932**, for over twenty years von Habsburg was a member of the European Parliament and President of the International Pan-European Union.'

Otto attained SMOM's senior dignity of **Bailiff Knight Grand Cross of Obedience**, one of the highest ranks within the Order's First Class. Wikipedia's confirmed list of his honours records this as his SMOM decoration: 'Sovereign Military Order of Malta: Bailiff Knight Grand Cross of Obedience of

the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, 2nd Class.' An alternate source records his honour as 'Bailiff Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion,' the most prestigious rank available to professed knights from noble families. Both designations confirm his standing at the summit of the Order's chivalric hierarchy.

At Otto's funeral in Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral in July 2011, attended by heads of state from across Europe, the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Fra' Matthew Festing, led a procession of approximately **two hundred Austrian knights and dames** of the Order — a remarkable tribute reflecting both the strength of the Austrian SMOM association and the depth of Otto's personal connection to the institution he had belonged to for nearly eight decades.

II.2 The SMOM Diplomatic Passport: A Sovereign Lifeline

The practical significance of Otto von Habsburg's SMOM membership reached its most dramatic expression during the years 1941–1965, when he was effectively stateless. In 1941, Adolf Hitler personally revoked the citizenship of Otto, his mother Empress Zita, and his siblings — an act of political theatre reflecting the degree to which the Nazi regime viewed the Habsburg pretender as a genuine threat. Otto found himself without nationality in any state and without a valid travel document.

SMOM, as a sovereign entity recognised by dozens of states, issues its own passports to officers and senior members of the Order. As a Bailiff Grand Cross, Otto was eligible for such a document, and the Order issued him one — a SMOM diplomatic passport in his name as 'His Imperial and Royal Highness Otto von Habsburg.' This document, alongside a Monegasque passport obtained through Charles de Gaulle's intervention in 1946 and a Spanish diplomatic passport, allowed Otto to travel, attend international meetings, lobby Allied governments, and eventually establish his post-war political career. The SMOM passport was, in the literal sense, a document that enabled his survival and his political mission during the most critical years of his life.

II.3 Habsburg, SMOM, and the Le Cercle Network

As documented in Part II of this series, Otto von Habsburg was a co-founder and patron of Le Cercle Pinay — the secret conservative forum established in 1952–53 alongside Antoine Pinay, Jean Violet, Konrad Adenauer, and Franz Josef Strauss. Research into the overlap between Le Cercle membership and SMOM affiliation reveals a striking concentration. Antoine Pinay himself was a Knight of Malta, as was Konrad Adenauer, who received the Magistral Grand Cross personally from SMOM Grand Master Prince Chigi — the Order's most senior decoration. Adenauer's receipt of this honour coincided with the same period in which Reinhard Gehlen, the former Nazi intelligence chief whom Adenauer's government was installing as head of the BND, was also receiving a senior SMOM decoration.

The concentration of SMOM Knights at the intersection of the Le Cercle network, the Pan-European Union, and Western intelligence operations was not coincidental. SMOM's sovereignty — its ability to issue passports, conduct diplomatic relations with over 100 states without being itself a nation, and operate across borders without normal customs and immigration oversight — made it a uniquely useful institutional framework for individuals involved in covert political and intelligence operations. Its Catholic identity and anti-communist orientation made it ideologically aligned with the Christian Democratic right that dominated post-war Western European politics.

PART THREE: SMOM in the Post-War World — Members, Decorated Individuals, and Intelligence Connections

III.1 SMOM's Post-War Institutional Position

After World War II, SMOM rapidly established itself as one of the most diplomatically and politically connected non-governmental organisations in the world. In 1951, Italian President Alcide de Gasperi — himself a Knight of Malta — formally recognised SMOM's diplomatic sovereignty. In 1983, the Vatican and SMOM established full diplomatic relations, formalising a connection that had existed since the twelfth century. By the 1980s, SMOM maintained diplomatic relations with 49 states and exchanges ambassadors with the majority of them. Today it has formal diplomatic relations with over 114 nations and observer status at the United Nations.

Its post-war role grew dramatically in the humanitarian sphere: SMOM operates medical and relief programmes in over 130 countries, maintaining hospitals, leprosariums, and disaster relief operations. Its access in conflict zones — enabled by its unique sovereign-but-stateless status — often exceeds that available to standard NGOs and sometimes even to the Red Cross.

Simultaneously, investigative journalists, historians, and researchers documented a parallel reality: the Order's membership roster included a disproportionate concentration of figures from Western intelligence agencies, covert political operations, right-wing political networks, and the military-industrial complex. The Order itself has always maintained that it is a purely religious and humanitarian organisation; critics have argued that its structural features — secrecy, sovereignty, diplomatic immunity, aristocratic membership culture, and fierce anti-communism — made it an unusually attractive framework for intelligence-adjacent activity.

III.2 The Gehlen Decoration: SMOM's Most Controversial Post-War Act

The most documented and most controversial single act of SMOM in the immediate post-war period was the award of the Grand Cross of Merit to **General Reinhard Gehlen** on **17 November 1948**.

Gehlen had been Hitler's chief of intelligence on the Eastern Front — head of the Wehrmacht's Foreign Armies East (Fremde Heere Ost) — and one of the regime's most effective intelligence officers. He was responsible for running operations in Soviet-occupied territory that were deeply implicated in the atrocities committed against Soviet Jews and civilian populations in that theatre. At the end of the war, Gehlen surrendered to the Americans, bringing with him his extensive files on Soviet military and intelligence operations. He struck a deal with the OSS and later the CIA to reconstitute his entire intelligence network — personnel, agents, and methods — in American service. The resulting 'Gehlen Organisation' (Org) operated from 1946 to 1956, when it was formalised as the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), the West German Federal Intelligence Service. Gehlen served as its first president under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

SMOM's 1948 Grand Cross of Merit to Gehlen was awarded just three years after the end of a war in which Gehlen's intelligence operations had facilitated some of the greatest atrocities in human history. It was not a humanitarian decoration but an expression of the Order's explicitly anti-communist politics and its strategic alignment with the Western intelligence community. Gehlen's brother, it was separately reported, served as secretary to a senior official at SMOM's Rome headquarters — providing a direct familial connection that may have facilitated the award.

III.3 The Ratlines: SMOM, the Vatican, and Nazi Escape Routes

The post-war years saw the emergence of what historians have termed the 'ratlines' — organised escape networks that enabled senior Nazi and SS officers to flee Europe, primarily to South America, using false documentation and Vatican assistance. SMOM was identified as a participant in these networks in multiple accounts.

SMOM was able to issue travel documents under its sovereign status. The Order's passports, issued in the names of individuals with false identities, provided cover for individuals fleeing prosecution for war crimes — a use of SMOM's sovereign passport-issuing capacity that served ends diametrically opposed to its humanitarian mission. Historian and journalist Penny Lernoux documented in her work *People of God* that after the war, 'the Vatican, the OSS, the SS, and various branches of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta joined to do battle against the common Soviet enemy — and to help Nazi war criminals escape.'

Among the documented SMOM connections to wartime networks was **Baron Luigi Parrilli**, an Italian aristocrat who was simultaneously a Knight of Malta and a papal chamberlain. Parrilli served as an intermediary in the secret negotiations between SS leaders and the CIA's Allen Dulles at the end of the war — the 'Operation Sunrise' negotiations for a separate peace in Italy — and subsequently participated in Vatican and CIA strategy for the 1948 Italian elections, serving as go-between for the CIA, the Vatican, and the Christian Democratic campaign to prevent a Communist electoral victory.

Another documented case: **Admiral Ellery Stone**, U.S. proconsul in occupied Italy, dispatched CIA counterintelligence chief **James Jesus Angleton** to rescue Prince **Valerio Borghese** — a senior Italian fascist military commander sentenced to death by Italian partisans for war crimes — from arrest. Borghese was a **Bailiff Grand Cross of Honor and Devotion** of SMOM — the Order's highest noble rank. In gratitude for American protection of Borghese and other SMOM members, the Order awarded its **Grand Cross decoration to Stone, Angleton, and Angleton's deputy**.

III.4 SMOM and the CIA: A Documented Overlap

The most extensively documented post-war connection of SMOM to any single institution is its overlap with the Central Intelligence Agency. The relationship was not institutional — the CIA was not in any formal sense a SMOM operation — but the concentration of Knights within the CIA's senior leadership was remarkable by any measure. The following CIA directors are widely reported, across multiple independent secondary sources, as Knights of Malta:

Director	Years	SMOM Connection	Source / Notes
William 'Wild Bill' Donovan	OSS 1942–1945 (CIA precursor)	Knight of Malta; co-operated post-war with Gehlen; friend of Cardinal Spellman	Multiple secondary sources; Wikipedia Category
Allen Dulles	1953–1961	Knight of Malta; ran CIA's Vatican connection; recruited Gehlen Org into CIA	Multiple secondary sources; Eric Jon Phelps; Eberhart
John A. McCone	1961–1965	Knight of Malta; industrialist; CFR member	Wikipedia Category: Knights of Malta; multiple secondary sources
William Colby	1973–1976	Knight of Malta; Phoenix Program director; Vietnam-era CIA	Multiple secondary sources

Director	Years	SMOM Connection	Source / Notes
George H.W. Bush	1976–1977	Knight of Malta; later 41st President; Skull & Bones; CFR	Multiple secondary sources
Frank C. Carlucci	Dep. Dir. 1978–1981	Knight of Malta; later Sec. of Defense; Carlyle Group chairman	Multiple secondary sources; Journal of History
William Casey	1981–1987	Knight of Malta; Reagan CIA director; Jesuit-educated Fordham Univ.	Wikipedia; Wikipedia Category; multiple sources; Carl Bernstein reporting
James Jesus Angleton	Counterintel. chief 1954–1975	Knight of Malta (some sources); received SMOM Grand Cross; rescued Borghese	Mosquitonet/CAQSMOM; libraryofrickandria.com

Note: SMOM membership lists are not publicly released by the Order. The above reflects the consistent findings of multiple independent researchers and secondary sources. Readers should treat individual attributions as well-supported but not independently verified from primary SMOM records.

III.5 SMOM and the 1948 Italian Elections

The 1948 Italian general election was the most consequential vote of the early Cold War in Western Europe. The Italian Communist Party (PCI), allied with the Socialists, was widely expected to win. The CIA, the Vatican, and SMOM joined in an unprecedented covert operation to prevent this outcome. The plan was coordinated in large part by **Luigi Gedda**, a Turin physician, Knight of Malta, and Catholic integralist who headed Italy's Catholic Action — a mass lay movement. Gedda organised a network of 18,000 'civic committees' across Italy to mobilise the Catholic vote. CIA officer **James Angleton**, then the CIA's Vatican liaison, strongly recommended and helped arrange CIA funding for Gedda's political machine. Baron Luigi Parrilli, also a SMOM Knight, served as intermediary. The Christian Democrats won a decisive victory, and Italy remained firmly in the Western camp — an outcome that SMOM's network had materially contributed to achieving.

PART FOUR: Catalogue of Known and Documented SMOM Members and Decoration Recipients (Post-1945 Focus)

The following catalogue draws on multiple sources including: Wikipedia's 'Category: Knights of Malta'; Covert Action Quarterly (CAQ) investigative reporting published in the 1980s; the database compiled by researcher Eric Samuelson J.D.; the Library of Rickandria SMOM reference; the Journal of History compilation; and the Wikispooks reference. Individuals are grouped thematically. The list distinguishes confidence levels where possible. **Non-Catholics may receive honorary decorations but cannot hold full membership.**

IV.1 Intelligence and Security Officials

Name	Role / Position	SMOM Rank / Decoration	Period / Notes
William J. Donovan	Founder & Director, OSS (CIA precursor)	Knight of Malta; also decorated by the Holy See	Wartime; close friend Cardinal Spellman; cooperated with Gehlen post-war

Name	Role / Position	SMOM Rank / Decoration	Period / Notes
Allen Dulles	Director, CIA	Knight of Malta	1953–61; OSS Switzerland chief WW2; recruited Gehlen network into CIA
John A. McCone	Director, CIA	Knight of Malta	1961–65; industrialist; later ITT board
William Colby	Director, CIA	Knight of Malta	1973–76; Phoenix Program; Vietnam operations
William Casey	Director, CIA	Knight of Malta; Jesuit-educated	1981–87; gave Pope John Paul II unprecedented CIA satellite access
Frank C. Carlucci	Deputy Dir. CIA; Secy of Defense	Knight of Malta	Deputy Dir. 1978–81; Secy of Defense 1987–89; Carlyle Group CEO
James Jesus Angleton	Chief of Counterintelligence, CIA	Grand Cross of SMOM (awarded for Borghese rescue)	1954–75; CIA Vatican liaison; rescued Valerio Borghese 1945
Ellery Stone	U.S. Proconsul, occupied Italy	Grand Cross of SMOM (awarded post-war)	Post-1945; sent Angleton to rescue Borghese
Reinhard Gehlen	Wehrmacht intelligence (Ost), founding president BND	Grand Cross of Merit, SMOM (awarded 17 Nov 1948)	Hitler's Eastern Front spy chief; reconstituted as CIA/BND asset; closest to definitive documented award
Vernon A. Walters	Acting Dir. CIA; U.S. Ambassador to UN	Knight of Malta; Jesuit-educated Stonyhurst	Military attaché career; Deputy Dir. CIA 1972–76
Alexandre de Marenches	Chief, French Intelligence (SDECE)	Knight of SMOM	French intel chief under Giscard d'Estaing (also SMOM); Cercle Pinay member
Luigi Gedda	Head, Italian Catholic Action	Knight of Malta	Organised 1948 anti-Communist election operation; CIA-funded
Luigi Parrilli	Italian aristocrat; Vatican chamberlain	Knight of Malta	SS-CIA Sunrise negotiations; Vatican-CIA 1948 election liaison
John C. Gannon	Deputy Dir., CIA	Knight of Malta (widely reported)	1998; CIA leadership
George Tenet	Director, CIA	Knight of Malta (widely reported)	1997–2004; Jesuit-trained

IV.2 Heads of State, Politicians, and Diplomats

Name	Role / Position	SMOM Connection	Notes
Otto von Habsburg	Last Crown Prince Austria-Hungary; EP Member; Pan-European Union President	Member since 1932; Bailiff Knight Grand Cross of Obedience; SMOM diplomatic passport	Documented on SMOM official obituary; Wikipedia
Antoine Pinay	Prime Minister of France	Knight of Malta; co-founder Le Cercle Pinay	1952–53 PM; Bilderberg founding member; SMOM confirmed by Le Cercle researchers
Konrad Adenauer	Chancellor, West Germany	Received Magistral Grand Cross from Grand Master Prince Chigi	Highest SMOM decoration; CDU founder; first WG Chancellor
Alcide de Gasperi	Prime Minister, Italy	Knight of Malta; recognised SMOM sovereignty 1951	Christian Democratic leader; founded Italian republic
Franz von Papen	Chancellor of Germany (1932); Ambassador	Knight of Malta	Catholic aristocrat; facilitated Hitler's appointment as Chancellor; 'the devil in a top hat'

Name	Role / Position	SMOM Connection	Notes
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	President of France	Knight of SMOM	1974–81; Cercle Pinay member; European Constitution drafter
King Juan Carlos I	King of Spain	Knight of SMOM (widely reported)	Reigned 1975–2014; Habsburg family connection
George H.W. Bush	Director CIA; 41st U.S. President	Knight of Malta (widely reported)	1976–77 CIA; 41st Pres. 1989–93; Skull & Bones
Raymond Flynn	Mayor of Boston; U.S. Ambassador to Vatican	Knight of SMOM; multiple papal decorations	Described as most papally-decorated American official
Alexander Haig	NATO Commander; U.S. Secretary of State	Knight of Malta	SACEUR 1974–79; Reagan Secy of State 1981–82; Jesuit-trained Georgetown
Pat Buchanan	White House advisor; presidential candidate	Knight of Malta; Jesuit-educated Georgetown	Advisor to Nixon, Ford, Reagan; political commentator
Zbigniew Brzezinski	National Security Advisor	Knight of Malta (widely reported)	Carter NSA; co-founder Trilateral Commission; CFR
Myron C. Taylor	U.S. Presidential Envoy to Vatican	Received SMOM Grand Cross (post-WWII)	Truman's Vatican envoy; decorated for Vatican-US wartime liaison
Rudy Giuliani	Mayor of New York City	Knighted by SMOM, 2001	Widely reported; post-9/11 knighthood
George Pataki	Governor of New York	Knight of SMOM (reported)	Governor 1995–2006
Tony Blair	Prime Minister, United Kingdom	Knight of SMOM (reported)	PM 1997–2007; Catholic convert after leaving office
Silvio Berlusconi	Prime Minister, Italy	Knight of SMOM (reported)	PM multiple terms 1994–2011; media mogul
Franz Josef Strauss	Bavarian Minister-President; Defense Minister	Knight of SMOM (reported via Le Cercle documentation)	Cercle Pinay founding member; CSU chairman; key NATO figure

IV.3 Military Figures

Name	Role	SMOM Connection	Notes
General Mark Clark	U.S. Army General; WW2 Italy campaign commander	Knight of Malta	Commanded Allied forces in Italy; post-war High Commissioner Austria
General Alexander Haig	NATO Supreme Allied Commander; U.S. Secretary of State	Knight of Malta	See politicians section for detail
General William Westmoreland	Commander U.S. Forces, Vietnam	Knight of Malta (reported)	Commander MACV 1964–68; Army Chief of Staff
Gen. Charles A. Willoughby	Chief of Intelligence for MacArthur	Knight of Malta (reported)	Self-described fascist; post-war Far East Command intel
General Jack Singlaub	Special Operations Commander; World Anti-Communist League	Knight of Malta (reported)	Iran-Contra; WACL chairman; special forces veteran
Admiral Ellery Stone	U.S. Proconsul, occupied Italy	Received SMOM Grand Cross	Documented; arranged Borghese rescue; see Section III.3
Prince Valerio Borghese	Italian fascist naval commander	Bailiff Grand Cross of Honor and Devotion (membership)	War crimes; rescued by Angleton; later attempted coup 1970
General Vernon A. Walters	Military attaché; Acting CIA Dir.; UN Ambassador	Knight of Malta	Jesuit-educated Stonyhurst; multilingual diplomat

Name	Role	SMOM Connection	Notes
Gen. Richard Stilwell	U.S. Army General; Special Operations	Knight of Malta (reported)	Cold War covert operations

IV.4 Business, Finance, and Media Figures

Name	Role	SMOM Connection	Notes
J. Peter Grace	Chairman, W.R. Grace & Co.	Knight of Malta; headed American SMOM association	Head of U.S. SMOM chapter; connected to post-war Nazi scientist network (Project Paperclip)
Henry Luce	Founder, TIME, LIFE, Fortune magazines	Knight of Malta	Built Time Inc. media empire; anti-communist Catholic conservative
William F. Buckley Jr.	Founder, National Review; media personality	Knight of Malta	YAF founder; CIA-linked; cultural conservative icon
Lee Iacocca	CEO, Chrysler Corporation	Knight of Malta	Auto industry leader; Capitol steps rescue of Chrysler
David Rockefeller	Chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank; CFR chairman	Knight of Malta (reported; attended 'Pesenti Group' meetings)	Attended Cercle Pinay meetings (described as 'Pesenti group'); CFR; Trilateral Commission founder
Carlo Pesenti II	Italian industrialist	Knight of Malta; financier of Cercle Pinay	Primary funder of Le Cercle Pinay; cement and banking empire
Henry Kissinger	National Security Advisor; Secretary of State	Knight of Malta (widely reported)	Nixon-Ford NSA and Secy of State; Nobel Peace Prize 1973; Bilderberg steering committee
Rupert Murdoch	Media proprietor; News Corp	Knight of SMOM (reported); also papal knighthood	Global media empire; Fox News; The Times; reported as ~2% of world media
Frank Sinatra	Singer; entertainer	Knight of Malta (reported)	Rat Pack; reported Vatican and political connections
Licio Gelli	Grand Master, P2 Masonic Lodge	Knight of Malta (widely reported)	Head of illegal P2 lodge; connected to Banco Ambrosiano scandal and Vatican Bank
Nicholas Brady	U.S. Secretary of the Treasury	Knight of Malta	Brady Plan for Third World debt; Senator from New Jersey
George Shultz	Secretary of State; Bechtel Group	Knight of Malta (reported)	Reagan Secy of State 1982–89; Bechtel Group president

IV.5 Clergy and Ecclesiastical Figures

Name	Role	SMOM Connection	Notes
Cardinal Francis Spellman	Archbishop of New York; 'American Pope'	SMOM patron in the United States; close friend of Donovan	Most powerful US Catholic churchman post-war; military vicar; anti-communist crusader
Cardinal Terence Cooke	Archbishop of New York	Knight of Malta (reported)	Successor to Spellman; military vicar of U.S. armed forces
Archbishop Edward Egan	Archbishop of New York	Knight of Malta; military vicar	Served during 9/11 period; head of U.S. SMOM chapter

Name	Role	SMOM Connection	Notes
Licio Gelli	P2 Grand Master (lay leader)	Knight of Malta	See business section; Vatican Bank connections
Jean Violet	French lawyer; SDECE operative; Opus Dei member	Knight of Malta (closely connected; Le Cercle co-founder)	Violet was co-founder of Cercle Pinay alongside Habsburg; Deep Vatican-intelligence nexus

IV.6 Additional Reported Members (Composite List)

The following individuals appear consistently across multiple secondary source membership compilations. The Order does not release its official membership list, so these cannot be independently verified but represent the consensus of available research. Non-Catholic individuals on this list may have received honorary decorations rather than full membership.

• James Buckley (Radio Free Europe head)	• William Buckley Jr. (National Review)
• Pat Buchanan (presidential advisor)	• Edwin J. Feulner (Heritage Foundation)
• Jeane Kirkpatrick (UN Ambassador)	• John Bolton (Under Secy. of State)
• Michael Bloomberg (Mayor of New York)	• Frank Capra (film director)
• Michael Chertoff (Homeland Security Dir.)	• Cartha DeLoach (Deputy Dir., FBI)
• Roy E. Disney (Disney corporation)	• Alan Keyes (diplomat; presidential candidate)
• Joseph Kennedy (Ambassador to UK)	• J. Edgar Hoover (Director, FBI) — honorary
• Gen. William Boykin (special forces)	• Burton Gerber (CIA station chief)
• John Volpe (Ambassador to Italy)	• Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd (USMC Commandant)
• Joseph Brennan (Irish politician)	• Emilio T. Gonzalez (Dir., USCIS)
• Frederic von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen	• Prince Carlos of Bourbon-Parma
• Fritz Thyssen (German industrialist)	• Heinrich Himmler — honorary decoration (reported; deeply contested)
• Harold 'Kim' Philby — reported (Soviet double agent; contested)	• James A. Farrell (U.S. Steel chairman)
• Myron Taylor (Truman envoy to Vatican)	• Count Franz Egon (European aristocrat)

PART FIVE: Significance, Analysis, and Conclusions

V.1 What the Habsburg-SMOM Connection Tells Us

The Habsburg dynasty's relationship with SMOM was not a mere historical curiosity but an active institutional reality that shaped modern history in concrete ways. The Charles V grant of Malta in 1530 created the geopolitical bulwark that held Ottoman expansion in the central Mediterranean for 268 years. The imperial dignities granted to the Grand Master in 1607 and 1630 gave the Order the sovereign status that it retains to this day, enabling its unique role as a state-like entity without territory. Otto von Habsburg's SMOM membership gave him a diplomatic passport that allowed him to

function as a political actor during years when he had no citizenship in any country — directly enabling the political work that contributed to Austria's post-war freedom.

The continuity of the Habsburg-SMOM relationship from Frederick Barbarossa's 1185 charter to Otto's 1932 membership and his 2011 funeral procession of two hundred Austrian knights represents one of the longest unbroken institutional relationships in European history — spanning eight centuries, two world wars, the fall of an empire, and the Cold War. It illustrates how certain aristocratic and Catholic institutional loyalties transcend political systems and survive the most violent disruptions of history.

V.2 SMOM's Post-War Dual Identity

The post-war SMOM presents two faces that are genuinely difficult to reconcile. On one side stands an organisation of extraordinary humanitarian achievement, operating medical and disaster relief programmes in 130 countries, maintaining access in conflict zones inaccessible to other organisations, and performing the functions of its medieval founding mission — care for the sick and vulnerable — at a global scale. These activities are not in question and represent a genuinely positive contribution to the world.

On the other side stands the documented record: a membership roster densely concentrated with Western intelligence officials, covert political operatives, and figures associated with some of the most ethically compromised episodes of the Cold War; a documented role in the rescue of Nazi war criminals via the ratlines; the 1948 Grand Cross decoration of Reinhard Gehlen; and documented participation in covert operations including the 1948 Italian elections. The Order's structural features — sovereign status, diplomatic immunity, passport-issuing capacity, aristocratic and Catholic membership culture, secretive internal proceedings, and fierce anti-communism — made it uniquely suited to serve as an informal framework for activities that did not belong in the formal operations of national governments.

Whether these twin roles — humanitarian organisation and covert-operations social network — were the result of deliberate institutional policy, the consequence of the ideological alignment of its membership with Western Cold War operations, or simply the inevitable result of concentrating powerful people with anti-communist convictions in a secretive sovereign entity is a question that historians have not definitively resolved. What is clear is that both dimensions were real.

V.3 The Network Map: How SMOM Connected the Key Actors

The reports in this series have documented overlapping networks whose membership converges at SMOM. Otto von Habsburg was a member of SMOM, the Pan-European Union, Le Cercle Pinay, and the European Parliament. Antoine Pinay was a Knight of Malta, a Bilderberg founding member, and co-founder of Le Cercle. Konrad Adenauer was decorated by SMOM and was a CDU founder in whose government Reinhard Gehlen — also SMOM-decorated — served as BND president. James Angleton was CIA counterintelligence chief, CIA Vatican liaison, and a SMOM decoration recipient. William Casey was a Knight of Malta, Reagan's CIA director, and the official who gave Pope John Paul II unprecedented access to CIA satellite intelligence for operations in Poland — operations that contributed to the fall of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe.

The network thus connected, at its densest nodes: the last Habsburg dynast, the founders of the post-war CIA, the founders of West Germany's intelligence service and government, the senior

leadership of the French intelligence community, the architects of post-war Italian Christian Democracy, the founders of Le Cercle Pinay, and the Vatican's own political and intelligence apparatus. SMOM was not the cause of this network — it was a meeting ground and a shared framework of identity that brought these actors together and provided them with a set of institutional privileges that facilitated their shared goals.

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This report synthesises publicly available historical scholarship, investigative journalism, and secondary reference compilations. SMOM does not publish an official membership list; all membership attributions reflect the findings of cited secondary sources. Claims regarding covert operations and intelligence connections represent the assessments of those sources and should be read as such. The existence of well-documented humanitarian activities by SMOM is not in question

and is noted in this report. Readers are encouraged to consult primary archival sources for further verification.